

6
116
SMOLLETT:

66
CELEBRATED ODE

TO

INDEPENDENCE.

*Thy spirit, Independence, let me share!
Lord of the lion-heart and eagle-eye,
Thy steps I follow with my bosom bare,
Nor heed the storm that howls along the sky.*



GLASGOW:

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ODE TO INDEPENDENCE.

STROPHE.

THY spirit, Independencé, let me share!
Lord of the lion-heart and eagle-eye,
Thy steps I follow with my bosom bare,
Nor heed the storm that howls along the sky.
Deep in the frozen regions of the north,
A goddess violated brought thee forth,
Immortal Liberty, whose look sublime
Hath bleach'd the tyrant's cheek in every varying
clime.

What time the iron-hearted Gaul,
With frantic Superstition for his guide,
Arm'd with the dagger and the pail,
The sons of Woden to the field defy'd;
The ruthless hag, by Weser's flood,
In Heaven's name, urg'd the infernal blow;
And red the stream began to flow—
The vanquish'd were baptiz'd with blood!

✠ Baptiz'd with blood.]—Charlemagne obliged four thousand Saxon prisoners to embrace the Christian religion, and immediately after they were baptiz'd ordered their throats to be cut.—Their prince, Vitikind, fled for shelter to Guthrick, King of Denmark.

ANTISTROPHE.

The Saxon prince in horror fled
 From altars stain'd with human gore;
 And Liberty his routed legions led
 In safety to the bleak Norwegian shore:
 There in a cave asleep she lay,
 Lull'd by the hoarse resounding main;
 When a bold savage pass'd that way,
 Impell'd by Destiny, his name Disdain.
 Of ample front the portly chief appear'd;
 The hunted bear supply'd a shaggy vest,
 The drifted snow hung on his yellow beard,
 And his broad shoulders brav'd the furious blast:
 He stopp'd; he gaz'd; his bosom glow'd,
 And deeply felt th' impression of her charms;
 He seiz'd th' advantage Fate allow'd,
 And straight compress'd her in his vig'rous arms.

STROPHE.

The Curlew scream'd, the Tritons blew
 Their shells to celebrate the ravish'd rite;
 Old Time exulted as he flew,
 And Independence saw the light.
 The light he saw in Albion's happy plains,
 Where, under cover of a flowering thorn,
 While Philomel renew'd her warbled strains,
 Th' auspicious fruit of stol'n embrace was born.—
 The mountain Dryads seiz'd with joy
 The smiling infant, to their charge consign'd;
 The Doric muse caress'd the fav'rite boy;
 The hermit Wisdom stor'd his opening mind.
 As rolling years matur'd his age,
 He flourish'd bold and sinewy as his sire;
 While the mild passions in his breast assuage
 The fiercer flames of his maternal fire.

ANTISTROPHE.

Accomplish'd thus he wing'd his way,
 And zealous rov'd from pole to pole,
 The rolls of right eternal to display,
 And warm with patriot thoughts th' aspiring soul,
 On desert * isles 'twas he that rais'd
 Those spires that gild the Adriatic wave,
 Where 'Fyranny beheld amaz'd
 Fair Freedom's temple, where he mark'd her grave,
 He steel'd the blunt Batavian's arms,
 To burst the Iberian's double chain †;
 And cities rear'd, and planted farms,
 Won from the skirts of Neptune's wide domain.
 He with the generous rustics sat,
 On Uri's rocks, in close divan ‡;
 And wing'd that arrow, sure as fate,
 Which ascertain'd the sacred rights of man.



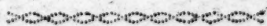
* On desert isles.]—*Although Venice was built a considerable time before the era here assign'd for the birth of Independence, the republic had not yet attained to any great degree of power and splendour.*

† To burst th' Iberian's double chain]—*The Low Countries were not only oppress'd by grievous taxation, but likewise threatened with the establishment of the Inquisition, when the Seven Provinces revolted, and shook off the yoke of Spain.*

‡ On Uri's rocks.]—*Alluding to the known story of William Tell and his associates, the fathers and founders of the confederacy of the Swiss Cantons.*

STROPHE.

Arabia's scorching sands he cross'd *,
 Where blasted nature pants supine,
 Conductor of her tribes adust,
 To Freedom's adamantine shrine;
 And many a Tartar hord forlorn, aghast †!
 He snatch'd from under fell Oppression's wing;
 And taught amidst the dreary waste
 Th' all-cheering hymus of Liberty to sing.
 He virtue finds, like precious ore,
 Diffus'd thro' every baser mould,
 Ev'n now he stands on Calvi's rocky shore,
 And turns the dross of Corsica to gold ‡.
 He, guardian genius, taught my youth
 Pomp's tinsel livery to despise:
 My lips by him chafis'd to truth,
 Ne'er paid that homage which the heart denies.



* Arabia's scorching sands.]—*The Arabs, rather than resign their independency, have often abandoned their habitations, and encountered all the horrors of the desert.*

† And many a Tartar hord.]—*From the tyranny of Jenghis Khan, Timur Bec, and other eastern conquerors, whole tribes of Tartars were used to fly into the remoter wastes of Cathay, where no army could follow them.*

‡ And turns the dross of Corsica.]—*The noble stand made by Paschal Pauli and his associates against the usurpation of the French King, must endear them to all the sons of Liberty and Independence.*

ANTISTROPHE.

Those sculptur'd halls my feet shall never tread,
 Where varnish'd Vice and Vanity combin'd,
 To dazzle and seduce, their banners spread,
 And forge vile shackles for the free-born mind.
 Where Insolence his wrinkled front uprears,
 And all the flowers of spurious Fancy blow;
 And Title his ill-woven chaplet wears,
 Full often wreath'd around the miscreant's brow;
 Where ever-dimpling Falsehood, pert and vain,
 Presents her cup of stale Profession's froth;
 And pale Disease, with all his bloated train,
 Torments the sons of Gluttony and Sloth.

STROPHE.

In Fortune's car behold that minion ride,
 With either India's glittering spoils oppress'd;
 So moves the sumpter-mule, in harness'd pride,
 That bears the treasure which he cannot taste.
 For him let venal bards disgrace the bay,
 And hireling minstrels wake the tinkling string;
 Her sensual snares let faithless Pleasure lay;
 And all her jingling bells fantastic folly ring;
 Disquiet, Doubt, and Dread shall intervene;
 And Nature, still to all her feelings just,
 In vengeance hang a damp on every scene,
 Shook from the baleful pinions of Disgust.

ANTISTROPHE.

Nature I'll court in her sequester'd haunts
 By mountain, meadow, streamlet, grove or cell,
 Where the pois'd lark his evening ditty chaunts,
 And Health, and Peace, and Contemplation dwell.

There Study shall with Solitude recline;
 And Friendship pledge me to his fellow-swains;
 And Toil and Temperance sedately twine
 The slender cord that fluttering Life sustains;
 And fearless Poverty shall guard the door;
 And Taste unspoil'd the frugal table spread;
 And Industry supply the humble store;
 And Sleep unbrib'd his dews refreshing shed:
 White-mantled Innocence, ethereal sprite,
 Shall chace far off the goblins of the night;
 And Independence o'er the day preside,
 Propitious power! my patron and my pride.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

LYRIC POETRY imitates violent and ardent passions. It is therefore bold, various, and impetuous. It abounds with animated sentiments, glowing images, and forms of speech often unusual, but commonly nervous and expressive. The composition and arrangement of parts may often appear disordered, and the transitions sudden and obscure; but they are always natural, and are governed by the movements and variations of the imitated passion. The foregoing ode will illustrate these observations.

The ode may be divided into three parts. The poet sets out with a brief address to Independence, imploring his protection. He sees, in idea, the high

object of his adoration, and, transported by an ardent and irresistible impulse, he rehearſes his birth, education, and qualities. He proceeds, in the ſecond place, to celebrate his office and moſt renowned achievements; and returns, at the end of the third ſtrophe, to acknowledge with gratitude the protection he had requeſted, and the power of Independence in preſerving him untainted by the debaſing influences of Grandeur, and the admiration of vain Magnificence.—Animated with this reflection, and conſcious of the dignity annexed to an independent ſtate of mind, he inveighs againſt thoſe “Minions of Fortune” who would impoſe upon mankind by the oſtentation of wealth, and the parade of pageantry:

In the laſt antiſtrophe the poet deſcends from his enthuiſaſm; he is leſs impetuous; the illuſtrious paſſions that animated and impelled him are exhausted; but they leave his mind full of their genuine and benign influences, not agitated and diſordered, as if their tendency had been vicious, but glowing with ſelf-approbation, ſoft, gentle, and compoſed.

FINIS.

4 MR 62

